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January 8, 1995

Dr. Leon Lederman  
FERMILAB  
P. O. Box 500 M/S  
Kirk and Pine Roads  
Batavia, IL 60510-0500

Dear Dr. Lederman:

As Chair of ICSU's Committee on Capacity Building in Science, I thought you might be interested in current information about the possibilities to build new global communication and information systems for science and education, which we corresponded about at an earlier stage.

Dr. Joshua Lederberg chaired a working group meeting, last June at Rockefeller University. The (interim) Lederberg Report has been accepted as a basis for international planning by Federico Mayor, and Joshua Lederberg has agreed to develop the vision and organize initial projects.<sup>1 2</sup>

The technical barriers to global video multicasting should be removed quickly. For example, Cornell University is completing its public domain program, Cu-SeeMe for the IBM; the Internet Society has adopted the new ST-II streaming protocol; Microsoft will integrate capabilities for a high degree of audio and video compression and PC-based Internet broadcasting and videoconferencing in its new Windows 95 system and network, and other vendors should follow their lead quickly; and SITA, which runs the world's international airlines reservations system (they are the world's largest private data network, and in every country) now seems ready to complete remaining gaps and provide Internet links for scientists in all countries under UN auspices.<sup>3</sup>

I am writing to ask whether CCBS might be interested to organize a High Quality Across All Fields Channel, a cooperative venture based on the model of C-SPAN? Each research university or lab would use \$ x thousand of its speakers' budget, videotape its own material of wider international interest (e.g., prepared

public lectures by distinguished scientists in their field of expertise) as a contribution to the Channel, and receive many times this value in return. The Channel would immediately enrich the curriculum of all educational institutions, worldwide.<sup>4</sup>

We would be very interested to work with ICSU and your committee to develop such a project and secure funding. If you would be interested to discuss the idea, I would like to meet with you - either in Washington or New York (if you plan to be on the East Coast in the near future) or in Illinois.

I will plan to call your office at the beginning of next week.

With all good wishes -

Sincerely,



(Dr.) Lloyd S. Etheredge, Director  
International Scientific Networks Project

cc: ✓ Joshua Lederberg  
Julia Marton-Lefèvre, ICSU

1. We expect an initial set of five prototype Internet channels in areas of biomedical research (e.g., malaria, genome-mapping, emerging diseases, polio elimination) to begin in 1995. The selection of five biomedical startup channels reflected the expertise of the people in the working group. They are fields where initial global experiments can evaluate the potential for these technologies - which the Report judged might be spectacular - to accelerate scientific innovation in addressing urgent problems. And in which members of the Rockefeller University Group felt they knew specific institutions and individuals who would help with organizing and fund-raising. Additional prototypes in different fields could be valuable, and leading roles by any member of ICSU, or groups of scientists interested to help, would be most welcome.

2. The Report also recommends that all scientific publications also become available in more affordable electronic form. What often appears to be a flood of publications to scientists in a small number of developed countries is a drought elsewhere and becoming a barrier to the growth of science.

3. We also believe that the Clinton Administration might be interested to make the USIA's WorldNet, a 24 hour/day global television channel (with 300 downlink stations, at all

Embassies and Legations) available as a global Internet backbone to support such an initiative.

4. Julia Marton-Lefèvre is well-known to us, and we have corresponded with individual members of ICSU. Among other organizations with whom we have discussed the idea, both Francisco Ayala and Rita Colwell, at AAAS, have expressed strong support of initiatives along these lines. We believe Tom Lovejoy at Smithsonian Institution is interested to help. In addition, Dr. Philip Lee, Assistant Secretary for Health at HHS, has given his blessing: NIH has a weekly lecture series by distinguished scientists that Dr. Gottesman, Deputy Director for Intramural Research, has suggested might be available. NIH also runs a series of lectures for bright high school students that are videotaped but not distributed more widely: these, also, could be made available.